

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) on Thursday introduced bipartisan legislation that would close a loophole in the Animal Welfare Act that allows thousands of large, commercial dog breeders who sell on the Internet to escape licensing and regulation.

"The Internet loophole in the Animal Welfare Act has resulted in widespread abuse of dogs in breeding facilities across the country," said Rep. Sam Farr. "We've seen hundreds of dogs crammed into small cages with no exercise or social contact. If we allow such abuse of animals, it doesn't say anything good about our society."

The Animal Welfare Act currently applies to breeders who sell to pet stores, but because online breeders sell directly to consumers, they're considered retail outlets even though they breed hundreds of dogs. The Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act, known as the PUPS Act, will close this loophole.

The bill will require that all dog breeders that sell more than 50 dogs per year be federally licensed and inspected. The legislation also mandates that dogs in commercial breeding facilities be given the opportunity to walk and exercise for at least an hour each day.

"Sam Farr addressed the issue of puppy mill abuse as a state lawmaker in Sacramento, and now he's helping to take it on at the federal level in Washington, D.C.," said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States. "An upgrade of the archaic federal law is desperately needed. Increasing numbers of puppy mills are operating without any federal inspections because they sell dogs direct to the public through the Internet and take advantage of a loophole in the law. These people need to be included in an inspections program, just like the operations that sell dogs to pet stores."

Rep. Farr has a long history as an animal rights advocate. As a member of the California State Assembly, he authored state-level legislation regulating puppy mills. When enacted, the law set significant standards for the industry that continue today.

Joining Rep. Farr in introducing the bipartisan bill were Democratic Rep. Lois Capps (Santa Barbara) and Republican Reps. Jim Gerlach (Pa.) and C.W. Bill Young (Fla.).

Bill text is available online here:

<http://www.farr.house.gov/images/stories/Documents/pups.pdf>

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